THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Import of Consumer Products

313. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to import consumer products like face cream, toothpaste etc; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALAUDDIN AHMED): (a) The Government have no proposal at present to import consumer products like face cream, tooth paste etc.

(b) Does not arise

Changes Sought in Export Policy of Books

314. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA:
SHRI P. UPENDRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that book publishers and distributors have sought changes in the export policy and grant of soft loans to give a "much needed" fillip to the export of books; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No specific proposal has been received from book publishers and distributors seeking change in the export policy and grant of soft loans.

Under the Export—Import Policy 1992—97, exports of books and publications are allowed freely. Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) is granted to the Chemicals and Allied Products Export Promotion Council, Calcutta, annually which helps to boost the export of books and publications. No special dispensation is granted to any industry in this regard.

Export of Coal

315. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to export coal in the coming years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof; and what is the present production of coal in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Export of coal is permitted without any restriction under the current EXIM policy. The level of production was around 238.23 million tonnes in 1992-93.

Implications of Nafta on India's External Trade

316. SHRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what would be the implications of the formation of North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA) on India's external trade;

(b) whether it is a fact that suggestions were made by two US-based Indian Economists that India should join NAFTA;

(c) if so, details thereof and

(d) what is the status of India's declared stand on free trade within SAARC countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to to (d) The North American Free Trade